



February is one of the most beautiful months in Northern Michigan—we usually have bright skies sparkling against fluffy beautiful snow and crystal ice. I know this appreciation of winter may not conform to the feelings of many a Northern Michigander. Many of us dread the depths of winter, and find ourselves contracting into a huddle by the woodstove while our children bounce around us. One definition of maturity is accepting the world in which we find ourselves and finding new ways to be in it—let's play with that idea, as we all are maturing each and every day.

As you know, this year we are exploring the concept of nourishment—we are thinking about how we feed our bodies, minds and hearts in order to develop and maintain the resilience we need to raise these youngsters with whom we now share our lives. We devote this issue of our newsletter to thinking about the role of outdoor play and experiences in our quest for a well nourished life.

The literature on the relationship of wellness and outdoor engagement is extensive. It seems clear that we humans require a connection and interaction with the natural environment. We see this requirement manifested when we look at studies of children's cognitive and social development and outdoor play, of adult mental health and outdoor engagement, and of physical health and outdoor activity. It appears that quite literally, our health and well-being is dependent on interactions we have with, and in, the great outdoors.

Ok, ok, so the research tells us to get outside more, to make sure that our children have extended play periods outside every day. It even reminds us that simply looking at green view sheds (what we see out the window) improves our well-being! I have a suspicion that many of you are thinking that this research is easy to act upon in the summer, when you throw towels, blankets, snacks, sand toys and kids in the car and head to the beach, but what in the world is so easy about outdoor play in the

winter? The simple act of getting outside is an ordeal- layer upon layer of clothing, toddlers in snowsuits are not the most agile creatures on the earth, and parents are often under equipped for hours of winter play.

What to do, what to do? I'm afraid that the recommendation is to build extra time into your day to struggle through the getting ready part, because the other side of the equation- the joy and other benefits of winter play are simply extraordinary. Winter play offers us a chance to play in a transformed world through which we move in entirely different ways — sledding, skiing, snowshoeing, skating, shuffling, sometimes even wading through deep snow. Our sandy hillsides become a sledding race course, the deck becomes a sculptor's studio, the yard a field of angels, and the lakes – oh the lakes are truly wonderful. Our northern lakes make the ultimate transformation of changed states—we can walk on water in the winter! We can peer through the ice at worlds unseen, can hear the groans and cracks, can slip and slide, skate and sail—the lakes are my favorite place to play in the winter.

The fresh air of winter scours our lungs, skin and sense of self. We feel the very edge of our being, as our skin responds to the cold air and gives us a constant safety reading. We play with a sense of self-protection, as we layer into the mittens grandma made, and the scarf made from old sweaters, the boots we've tucked our feet into for so many winters, and the old friend coat. (If you lack outerwear, please let us know and we will do our best to help supply you with winter gear.)

Let us know if we can help you think about how to structure time and find the equipment needed for winter outdoor play. Bundle up and get out there—feel the blush of life in your cheeks and wield your sculpting skills as you people your yard with snow friends with whom you can share the misery and delights of your feelings about winter—these friends will be great listeners and will never burden you with advice!

Parenting Communities of Leelanau County

February 2010

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURS	FRIDAY	SAT
1 FOOD PANTRY: • 1-3p SB Congregational Church • 5-7p St. Gertrude's Church Northport <hr/> Baby Pantry 5-7 pm Suttons Bay Immanuel Lutheran Church Annex	2 WIC & IMMS Call for appt: 256-0200	3 Laundry Project 9 am - 11:45 am Suttons Bay Laundromat <hr/> Glen Lake Playgroup 10 -11:30 am Glen Arbor Township Hall <hr/> Library/Story Time 10:30a-11:30a Leland Township Library <hr/> Food Pantry 1-3p Suttons Bay Congregational Church	4 Wiggler's Story Hour 11 am – noon Leelanau Twp Library <hr/> FOOD PANTRY 5-6:30p Glen Lake Community Reform Church	5 Music Time 10 – 11 am Leland School Room 140	6
8 FOOD PANTRY: • 1-3p SB Congregational Church • 5-7p St. Gertrude's, Northport <hr/> Baby Pantry 1-3 pm Suttons Bay Immanuel Lutheran Church Annex <hr/> WIC call for appt. 256-0200	9 Parents Together 6 – 8 pm Leelanau Children's Center, Northport Dinner & childcare provided.	10 Glen Lake Playgroup 10 -11:30 am Glen Arbor Township Hall <hr/> Library/Story Time 10:30a-11:30a Leland Township Library <hr/> Food Pantry 1-3p Suttons Bay Congregational Church <hr/> Parents Together • 6 – 8 pm Leelanau Children's Center, Leland Dinner & childcare provided.	11 Wiggler's Story Hour 11 am – noon Leelanau Twp Library <hr/> FOOD PANTRY 5-6:30p Glen Lake Community Reform Church	12 Paint & Playdough 10 – 11 am Leland School Room 140 <hr/> Bilingual Playgroup 5:30 – 6:30 pm Leelanau Children's Center, Leland	13 Leelanau Children's Center's Concert & Carnival Doug Hansen & band perform songs from "Songs from the Circle" Don't miss the family fun starting at Noon! 12:00 pm: Concert kick off! 12:30 – 3 pm: Carnival! <u>LELAND PUBLIC SCHOOL</u> <i>lunch served beginning 11:30 am</i>
15 Young Families Playgroup 5 – 7 pm Suttons Bay - Immanuel Lutheran Church – For parents aged teen thru 23. <hr/> FOOD PANTRY: • 1-3p SB Congregational • 5-7p St. Gertrude's, Northport <hr/> Baby Pantry 5-7 pm Suttons Bay Immanuel Lutheran Annex	16	17 Laundry Project 9 am – 11:45 am Suttons Bay Laundromat <hr/> Glen Lake Playgroup 10 – 11:30 am Glen Lake Community Reform Church <hr/> Library/Story Time 10:30a-11:30a Leland Township Library <hr/> Food Pantry 1-3p SB Congregational <hr/> WIC & IMMS call for appt: 256-0200	18 Wiggler's Story Hour 11 am – noon Leelanau Twp Library <hr/> FOOD PANTRY 5-6:30p Glen Lake Community Reform Church	19 Creative Movement 10 – 11 am Leland Public School Room 140	20
22 Baby Pantry 1-3 pm Suttons Bay Immanuel Lutheran Church Annex	23	24 WIC • call for appt. 256-0200 <hr/> Glen Lake Playgroup 10 -11:30 am Glen Lake Community Reform Church <hr/> Library/Story Time 10:30a-11:30a Leland Township Library <hr/> Food Pantry 1-3p SB Congregational	25 Kindergym • 9:30 (42 mos- 4 yrs) • 10:30 (newborn – 26 mos) • 11:30 (26– 42 mos) <hr/> Wiggler's 11 am – noon Leelanau Twp Library	26 Puppet & Story Time 10 – 11 am Leland Public School Room Elementary Library	27

Leland:

- Patti Wurm... pattimommy@aol.com218-2225
- Tricia Denton... tricia@tuque.com313-0359
- Bea Cruz.....392-6246

Glen Lake:

- Kathy Bartell.....510-7883
- kathybartell@gmail.com

Suttons Bay: Alison Manning.....866-0605
 manninga@suttonsbay.k12.mi.us

Northport: Angela Poneta-Dedenbach.....357-2715
 angelapd@leelanauchildrenscenter.org

Leelanau Children's Center **CARNIVAL 2010**



A Valentine's celebration with your family



- . **CAKE WALK**
 - . **FUN GAMES**
 - . **RAFFLE PRIZES**
 - . **Valentine Card Making**
- Make your Valentine's Day card and they will be delivered by our messengers in the gym.
- . **LUNCH**

Raffle prizes include:

iPod Nano

Romantic dinner for two at
the fabulous

North restaurant

Pool and Pizza party
for up to 10 kids!

**KICKIN' IT OFF WITH
DOUG HANSEN
AND HIS BAND
TWANG, BANG
& FIDDLE!**

**12:00 Concert for kids
of all ages!!!**

**SERIOUSLY. A CONCERT IN
LEELANAU COUNTY!**

Doug and the band will perform your favorite
songs from their debut CD "Songs from the Circle"
**DON'T MISS THE CARNIVAL KICK OFF
STARTING AT NOON!!!**



FEBRUARY 13th ~12 pm – 3 pm

Leland Public School

Emotional Vocabularies

from the February 2007 issue of Parenting Communities newsletter

The early childhood years mark a period in which children are struggling to understand how people behave. We are governed by our emotions and need to learn about life as an emotional being. When our children are young, we have the opportunity to help them recognize emotional states and begin to learn tricks of living within the emotional sea of life.

We all have experienced the relief and/or joy of giving a name to something that interests or worries us. Think about learning the names of the plants on your favorite walk, or streets in the new city you moved to, or the people in your new class. The act of naming offers the learner a framework to think and understand. Relief comes when we recognize that a name, which often denotes a category or classification, means that others have seen or experienced that which we are seeing/ experiencing. Turning to the naming of emotions – if someone tells me I look frustrated, the very act of naming my emotion suggests that others have felt the way I do. This shared experience tells me I am like others – something we all need to know, especially when emotions are rocking one's sense of self.

Emotions provoke overwhelming sensations—there is a physiological response to an emotional surge. The brain responds to many emotions by reducing the flow of oxygen to the top of the brain and energizing the large muscles. Think of the stories you have heard about mothers lifting impossibly heavy objects off of trapped children or people running long distances to find help. These are people who were running on adrenaline and oxygenated muscles. There is a distinct sensation one feels when this process is underway, a sensation and a call to ACT or RESPOND. Children need to learn that this sensation is normal, predictable and manageable.

The first step in the emotional management process is to help children recognize emotions by naming them. You can help your child by using a broad emotional vocabulary. Describe your own feelings – *I feel sort of cranky this morning, I may need a moment alone before breakfast. Oh my, I feel joyful today, how about you?* Suggest names of the emotions you think your child may be feeling — *Oooo, you look irritated! Your face is glowing, are you delighted?* This simple step accomplishes a great deal. It builds your child's vocabulary, helps normalize his/her experience, and keeps the brain engaged during a potential emotional surge. The only caution in the naming process is that we not tell children how they feel. Avoid saying "you are angry", instead suggest it by telling the child s/he looks (sounds, appears, etc..) angry. The truth is that you don't know for sure how anyone else feels and we want to give children the tools to self evaluate.

The early childhood years are the perfect time to introduce children to the practice of naming and recognizing emotions. Young children are acquiring language, increasing vocabularies and learning self-help skills. What better time to introduce an emotional vocabulary and response patterns!

Parenting Communities of Leelanau County is funded by: Children's Trust Fund • Michigan Department of Education • Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians • United Way • Way to Grow • Michigan Women's Foundation • Michigan State University Extension • Northport Public School • Suttons Bay Public Schools • Glen Lake Community Schools • Leland Public Schools

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